

## What is Merit Pay?

Merit Pay is a program to offer monetary incentives to people who are working in a registered group or family child care home, licensed child care center, Head Start, Early Head Start, Tribal Head Start, or Resource & Referral Agency.

### Who Qualifies for Merit Pay?

Any individual who works at least 15 hours a week in a Montana licensed or registered child care facility, Head Start, Early Head Start, Tribal Head Start, or Resource & Referral Agency depending upon which Merit Pay being applied for.

Is approved training required for Merit Pay? YES, all training must be approved by the Montana Training Approval System or be education provided through an accredited Montana College.

### When do I apply for Merit Pay?

Merit Pay I applications are available during the month of August. Infant/Toddler Merit Pay applications will be provided by the instructor. Higher Ed applications are available May 6th for Fall Semester and October 14th for Spring Semester. **NOTE:** Merit Pay Applications are available at your local Child Care Resource & Referral or online at [www.childcare.mt.gov](http://www.childcare.mt.gov). The ECSB has a strict deadline which must be followed. Merit Pay I is DUE in the ECSB office by 5:00 p.m., September 19, 2008. Applicants will be informed by October 13, 2008 whether they have been approved or denied. Higher Ed are due June 6, 2008 for fall Semester and November 21, 2008 for Spring Semester. *Faxed Applications will not be accepted.*

### When do I complete my training?

Merit pay training must be completed between August 1, 2008 and August 31st 2009. Any training which was completed prior to these dates will NOT be included.

### Can I receive more than one Merit Pay?

**NO**, individuals may only apply and be approved for one Merit Pay program. Multiple applications will be denied.

**For more information Contact:**

**The Early Childhood  
Services Bureau  
Early Childhood Program**

**Specialist at  
(406) 444-1400**

**or**

**Toll Free at  
1-866-239-0458**

**or**

**Your local Child Care Resource  
and Referral Agency**

**Applications will now be  
available online at  
[www.childcare.mt.gov](http://www.childcare.mt.gov)**



**2008-2009**

**Merit  
Pay  
Program**



## Merit Pay I

### Who can apply?

Individuals working in a Montana licensed or registered childcare program at least 15 hours per week.

### How much training is required?

Applicants may apply for **Track 1**: 23 hours of non-college credit training or **Track 2**: 50 hours of non-college credit training. The hours of training include the 8 hour requirement for licensing.

### How much money am I awarded?

When the applicant submits a training summary, verification of training and a copy of their Montana Early Care & Education Practitioner Registry Certificate, they can receive \$250 for **Track 1** or \$500 for **Track 2**.

### Does all training need to be approved?

**YES**, all training must be approved by the Montana Early Care and Education Training Approval System.

### Do I have to be on the Montana Practitioner Registry?

**YES**, it is a requirement to be on the Montana Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry. Every Merit Pay participant must be an active member before receiving any funds; however, you may apply for Merit Pay if you are not a current member.

### What are ECSB priorities?

1. Applicants who have NEVER received Merit Pay.
2. Applicants working towards a CDA (without college credit) or Accreditation credential.
3. Applicants who are taking additional training to improve their care giving skills.
4. Available funding

## The Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers Merit Pay

### Who can apply?

Individuals working in a Montana licensed or registered childcare program at least 15 hours per week. Individuals successfully completing the Mt West Ed Infant/Toddler Program will automatically be eligible for the Infant Toddler Merit Pay.

### How much training is required?

Applicants must successfully complete the 60 hour MT West Ed Infant/Toddler Program for Infant Toddler training. It is not necessary to apply in advance of taking these courses.

### How much money am I awarded?

Once an applicant has submitted a training summary, verification of training, and a copy of their Montana Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry Certificate, they can receive \$500.

### Does all training need to be approved?

**YES**, all training must be approved by the Montana Early Care and Education Training Approval System.

### Do I have to be on the Montana Practitioner Registry?

**YES**, it is a requirement to be on the Montana Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry. Every Merit Pay participant must be an active member before receiving any funds, however, you may apply for Merit Pay if you are not a current member.

### What are ECSB priorities?

1. Applicants who have NEVER received Merit Pay.
2. Available funding
3. Caregivers who have achieved the Montana Infant Toddler caregiver certification are ineligible to participate.

## Higher Education Merit Pay

### Who can apply?

Individuals working a minimum of 15 hours a week in:

- A registered group or family child care home,
- A licensed child care center,
- A Montana Head Start, Early Head Start or Tribal Head Start, or
- A Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (employees taking classes to meet Level VI on the Montana Early Care & Education Practitioner Registry.)

### How much training is required?

Applicants must submit a plan of Study which demonstrates they are working towards a CDA with college credit, CCDS Apprenticeship Certificate, AA, BA/BS degree in Early Childhood or Child Development from a Montana college. Applicants seeking a MA degree may be approved for credits received from a college outside of Montana.

### How much money am I awarded?

Once an applicant has submitted a training summary, a copy of their grades, and a copy of their Montana Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry Certificate, they can receive \$750 for 6 credits taken, 2 times per year.

### Do I have to be on the Montana Practitioner Registry?

**YES**, it is a requirement to be on the Montana Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry. Every Merit Pay participant must be an active member before receiving any funds, however, you may apply for Merit Pay if you are not a current member.

### What are ECSB priorities?

1. Income and other financial assistance available.
2. Applicants who have received Higher Education Merit Pay and are enrolled in an early childhood education degree or certificate program.
3. Available funding

### What if I receive other types of assistance?

If an applicant receives a FULL Pell grant, or FULL Head Start funding, or FULL funding from any other source, they are **NOT** eligible